

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 NSC-05 PM-03 INR-05
CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 TRSE-00 IO-06 PRS-01 /045 W
-----126545 192109Z /64

R 191701Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2405
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USNATO

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 17384

LIMDIS

WASHINGTON REPEAT FURTHER AS APPROPRIATE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, FR, GW
SUBJECT: THE MITTERRAND VISIT TO BONN

REF: PARIS 28387

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING MITTERRAND'S VISIT TO BONN ON
SEPTEMBER 29, MITTERRAND TOLD THE GERMANS THAT HE
PLANNED TO CONTINUE TO STRIVE FOR AN ELECTORAL
ALLIANCE WITH THE PCF ALTHOUGH HE DOUBTED THAT IT WOULD
BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE A COMMON PROGRAM FOR NEXT YEAR'S
ELECTIONS. HE SAID THE PCF HAD WANTED TO BREAK OFF THE
TALKS ON A COMMON PROGRAM BECAUSE IT WAS BECOMING
INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT ITS OWN FUTURE IN PURSUING
SUCH A PROGRAM WITH THE SOCIALIST PARTY. THE SPD
FEELS THAT THE MEETING, WHICH REPRESENTED SCHMIDT'S
FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH MITTERRAND, WAS VERY
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VALUABLE.

BECAUSE OF THE SENSITIVE CHARACTER OF THE BONN
DISCUSSION, GENERALLY CONDUCTED IN A SMALL CIRCLE OR
EVEN BY SCHMIDT AND MITTERRAND THEMSELVES WITH ONLY
INTERPRETERS PRESENT, WE WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING THE
INFORMATION VERY CLOSELY HELD. END SUMMARY.

1. AN SPD OFFICIAL HAS
GIVEN THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR THE FOLLOWING RUNDOWN ON
MITTERRAND'S CONVERSATIONS WITH THE SPD AND THE
CHANCELLOR HERE ON SEPTEMBER 29:

A. MITTERRAND DWELT AT CONSIDERABLE LENGTH ON HIS
PERCEPTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PCF AND THE
PS. HE SAID THAT HE HAD TAKEN THE PS FROM A STRUGGLING
PARTY TO ONE THAT COULD WIN OVER THIRTY PERCENT OF THE
FRENCH ELECTORATE AND WAS NOW THE STRONGER OF THE TWO
PARTIES OF THE LEFT.

B. MITTERRAND SAID THAT THIS HAD CREATED MANY
PROBLEMS FOR THE PCF AND FOR MARCHAIS. HE SAID THE PCF
HAWKS (E.G., LEROI) WERE AGAINST THE UNION WITH THE PS
AND THAT MARCHAIS DID NOT ALWAYS CARRY A MAJORITY IN
THE POLITBURO. HE SAID THE PCF WAS INCREASINGLY AFRAID
TO BE THE NUMBER TWO PARTY IN A GOVERNMENT, SINCE IT
WOULD RECEIVE EITHER UNIMPORTANT OR UNATTRACTIVE
MINISTRIES (E.G., ECONOMICS, PLANNING, ETC.).

C. GIVEN THIS SITUATION, MITTERRAND BELIEVED THAT
THE PCF HAD WANTED TO BREAK OFF THE PROGRAM NEGOTIATIONS
AND HAD MERELY CHOSEN THE NATIONALIZATION ISSUE AS THE
CATALYST. HE SAID THAT, DURING THE LAST PHASE OF THE
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NEGOTIATIONS, THE PCF HAD EVEN REFUSED TO DISCUSS PS
PROPOSALS ON NATIONALIZATION AND THAT THE HUMANITE
EDITORIAL ON THE DAY AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE TALKS
HAD, TO THE CERTAIN KNOWLEDGE OF THE PS, EVEN BEEN PUT
INTO TYPE BEFORE THE TALKS HAD ACTUALLY BEEN BROKEN OFF.

D. HOWEVER, MITTERRAND TOLD THE SPD THAT HE WANTED
TO CONTINUE THE ELECTORAL ALLIANCE EVEN IF NO COMMON
PROGRAM COULD BE DEVELOPED. MITTERRAND EXPLAINED THAT
SUCH A SITUATION WAS NOT UNPRECEDENTED IN FRENCH
POLITICS.

E. MITTERRAND TOLD THE SPD THAT HE BELIEVED IN A
FIRST BALLOT THE PARTY STRENGTH IN FRANCE WOULD RUN
ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: PS: THIRTY PERCENT; PCF: NINETEEN
PERCENT; GAULLISTS: THIRTY PERCENT; GISCARDIENS:
SEVENTEEN PERCENT. HE SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE
PARTIES OF THE RIGHT WOULD FORM AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE
AND COULD SWAMP THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT IN A SECOND
BALLOT. THEREFORE, MITTERRAND HAD ARGUED, IT WOULD BE
ESSENTIAL FOR THE LEFT TO HAVE AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE

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LIMDIS

OF ITS OWN.

F. THE PROBLEM, AS MITTERRAND DESCRIBED IT, WAS THAT THE PCF WELL UNDERSTOOD THAT IN AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE THE PS, WHICH WOULD HAVE A MAJORITY OF THE LEFT BALLOTS IN MOST ELECTORAL DISTRICTS, WOULD EMERGE WITH THE LARGER NUMBER OF SECOND-BALLOT CANDIDATES AND AS A MUCH STRONGER PARTY IN THE PARLIAMENT. THEREFORE, MITTERRAND REASONED, HE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO FORCE THE PCF INTO AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE. HE PLANNED TO DO THIS UPON HIS RETURN TO FRANCE BY MAKING OFFERS THAT THE PCF COULD NOT REFUSE -- E.G., UNILATERAL OFFERS TO HAVE PS CANDIDATES STEP DOWN IN DISTRICTS WHERE THE PCF CANDIDATE HAD GAINED MORE VOTES ON THE FIRST BALLOT.

2. THE SPD IS INCLINED TO SHARE MITTERRAND'S ANALYSIS REGARDING THE FEAR OF THE PCF. OUR SPD SOURCE POINTED TO A PARAGRAPH (BEGINNING "DONNER AU PARTI SOCIALISTE...") IN THE OCTOBER 7 HUMANITE EDITORIAL AS
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THE CONCRETE EXPRESSION OF THE ALLEGED PCF FEAR THAT ITS COLLABORATION WITH MITTERRAND WAS PROPELLING THE PS TO VICTORY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COMMUNISTS.

3. OUR SPD SOURCE TOLD US THAT SCHMIDT, WHO HAD NOT PREVIOUSLY MET WITH MITTERRAND, ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THIS MEETING. SCHMIDT HAD ABSOLUTELY INSISTED THAT HE WANTED TO MEET MITTERRAND BEFORE THE LATTER ENTERED THE CAMPAIGN OR BEFORE HE BECAME FRENCH PRIME MINISTER. THE SPD AND PS HAD BEEN TRYING TO ARRANGE A MEETING SINCE FEBRUARY ALTHOUGH THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE HAD OPPOSED THE MEETING. HOWEVER, THE SPD, LIKE THE PS, HAD WANTED TO AWAIT THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROGRAM NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE MITTERRAND CAME HERE.

4. THE GERMANS HERE WERE ASTONISHED AT MITTERRAND'S APPARENT LACK OF DETAILED KNOWLEDGE ON A NUMBER OF SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES THAT HE WOULD FACE IF HE WERE TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER. THEY WERE IMPRESSED WITH HIS CAPACITY FOR POLITICAL ANALYSIS AND WITH HIS SOVEREIGN DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DOMESTIC TACTICAL QUESTIONS THAT THE PARTY FACED, BUT THEY HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE HAD NOT CONCENTRATED EQUAL ATTENTION TO A NUMBER OF VITAL SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS THAT THE LEADERS OF THE EUROPEAN STATES FREQUENTLY DISCUSS WITH EACH OTHER.

5. THE ABOVE ACCOUNT WAS PRESENTED TO IS IN A COMPREHENSIVE MANNER AND WE ARE INCLINED TO VIEW IT AS ACCURATE. NONETHELESS, WE CAUTION THAT IT IS FROM ONE SOURCE ONLY AF, GIVEN THE CLOSELY-HELD WAY MITTERRAND'S MEETING HAS BEEN TREATED IN BONN, DIFFICULT TO DOUBLE CHECK.

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